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Tracts for the People.

"*Salus populi suprema lex esto;*"
(that is,)
"*Let the* SALVATION *of the people be our highest principle.*"

THE LAMP OF THE SANCTUARY.

PART III.—ITS EXTINCTION.

[Continued from Page 40.]

"*The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and the lamp that is over him shall be put out.*" Job xviii.

It is a trite remark, that as a lamp will shine the more brightly in proportion to the darkness which surrounds it, so will virtue appear more brilliant when the gloom of adversity has closed around it. Or, still drawing our illustration from our subject, we may say, that as the lamps of Gideon's soldiers did not show their dazzling brilliancy, till the vessels of clay in which they were inclosed had been bruised, broken, and utterly crushed, so did the virtues of Pierrot's wife and daughter break forth with increased lustre, the more their poor humanity was bowed down, the more their bodies were wasted with want, and their hearts broken with affliction. Upon that of the daughter a new grief seemed now to have come; but though it passed occasionally like a cloud over her brow, sufficiently distinct not to escape her watchful mother's eye, yet was it always succeeded immediately by a bright serenity, which clearly came not from earthly consolation. While they were sitting together at their work in silence, a sigh would escape her, a tear would steal down; but the next instant her hands would drop upon her knees, her eyes and countenance be up-turned towards heaven, a bright smile would beam upon her features, and her lips would move as if addressing some one near.

In those moments her mother ventured not to address her, but would gaze on her in admiration and awe, believing her to be in close communion with better spirits.

At length, one day she asked her what now so much occupied her thoughts. "I will conceal nothing from you, my dearest mother," replied the child; "the truth is, I can hardly bear to think, that in a few days my term of consecration, under your vow, will expire, and that I must put off my white garment, and resume that of the world."

"And yet, my child," her mother answered, "it is better for us all that it should be so. You are now getting strong enough to go to work in the fields, and this is impossible in your present attire. Nor can I go, and leave you alone at home. It is indeed necessary that we should exert ourselves more and more; for"—— She paused, for what she was going to say would have been a reproach to her husband, and that she would not utter. But her tears expressed her meaning. Her daughter replied:

"It is not that I grudge toil, or shrink from being like what I in truth am, a poor peasant girl; but I feel as though, on putting off this religious attire, I shall be exposing myself more completely to the dangers and temptations of the world; and, perhaps, losing some claim to that protection of the Queen of Heaven, as whose child I have been till now brought up.

"But it is time, my dear mother, that I should tell you of an offering which I made on that night when, for the first time, *he* absented himself from home, and have often since repeated before the altar. There I have again and again prayed that I may never be allowed to put off my white garments, but may be allowed to bear them down into my grave unstained; and farther"—— she hesitated and faltered as she added, "I have begged of God to take my life in exchange for my dear father's conversion and return to virtue. I cannot help hoping that my prayer and offering have been accepted."

Her mother was greatly troubled on hearing this, and hastily answered: "Beware, my child, lest you tempt Heaven. May God hear your prayer on behalf of your poor father, but not on that condition. Indeed," she added, after a moment's reflection, "I do not see what reason there can be to fear it; for never, in spite of our sufferings, did you seem to me stronger or in better health."

It was now, notwithstanding, finally arranged between mother and daughter, that on the morning of the anniversary of the vow, they should proceed very early to the church, so to enjoy a few hours' silent prayer, by the light of the sacred lamp, which the child loved so much, before receiving communion in thanksgiving; after which, she would change her white dress for the ordinary peasant's cloak, and so return home. And these preliminaries arranged, and the priest's consent obtained, who was to leave the church door open for them, they both forbore to revert again to the subject. Only Marie seemed ever intent on it, in her thoughts, now occupied in preparing the dress in which she should make her last appearance, as one consecrated to God, that its whiteness and purity should be perfect; and in weaving a garland of choicest flowers, as her last offering, to crown the image of her Lady and Patroness.

But once again we must withdraw our reader's attention from the contemplation of the virtues of mother and daughter, to trace the ruinous course of the unfortunate Pierrot, and see him plunged, at last, into the lowest abyss of guilt and degradation. The month was expired, which had been agreed on for the commission of the crime, promised to be his last. The day in fact was come, on the night of which it had to be perpetrated, and still an impenetrable secret was preserved by all around him, as to what it was to be. By this time, every thing worth moving in the houses of his two accomplices, was packed up, ready for flight, and mules were in readiness to carry their baggage and families over the frontiers. As to himself, he had not taken any measures, either to fly or to secure himself against the pursuit of justice; not merely because he was in such ignorance about the crime, that he knew not how he could best shape his course, especially with his family on his hands; but also, because he was almost reckless as to consequences, and hardly cared what the result might be. A prey to remorse, to shame, and to bitter grief, he would have preferred a prison, the galleys, or the scaffold, to his present state; and forgot all consequences and all risks in the assurance that, after this one crime, he should be freed from his present thraldom. During that last day of their partnership in guilt, his companions strove to occupy his thoughts, and divert him from unpleasant anticipations, by their wild discourse; and after their meal, they plied him with strong drink, which, if it did not actually intoxicate him, dulled his faculties, and heated his blood. He was ready for anything, and he seemed to have made up his mind for any crime, in a desperate mood of excitement, almost amounting to phrenzy. And still he shuddered within himself, at thinking, that possibly murder might be demanded from him: no other wicked deed now seemed to him terrible, or impossible. And yet, when the proposed crime was unveiled to him, it was one as much beyond his thoughts as this, and appeared to him no less frightful; and he shrank from it with a trembling horror that staggered his very companions.

It was not till late at night, when on the point of starting from the house, that the object of their expedition was revealed to Pierrot. It was no less than to plunder the church of Mont-Marie, to strip it of its silver donatives, its rich altar-plate, the ornaments of its image and its tabernacle, and carry the whole over the frontiers into Spain. They had made all necessary arangements for concealing or melting down their rich booty, so as to escape detection.

Had a thunderbolt struck the head of the unfortunate Pierrot, he could hardly have been more stunned than he was on hearing this. The moment he was a little recovered from his first amazement, he began to storm, and protest that no consideration on earth should ever prevail on him to commit so horrible and so ungrateful a sacrilege. But his companions now knew their power, and dealt with him as a skilful angler does with a fish that feels the first smart of the hook: they gave him play, and allowed him to vent his feelings; and then, when he had exhausted his first burst of passion, began to draw him into the full gripe of their wicked might. For this purpose, they represented to him, that it was too late to draw back—for if he attempted it, they would immediately fulfil their threats of delivering him up. They told him that it was mere folly to shrink from the commission of one crime more, which they had promised him should be his last; that if he ever repented, it would be as easy to repent of this, as of its predecessors; if not, that he was fully lost by what he had already done, and could not make his case worse. Many other wicked arguments and persuasions they employed; and when at last all else had failed, they savagely threatened to wreak their vengeance upon his family, and to proceed at once to murder his wife and daughter.

They had two motives for this cruel earnestness, in having him as their accomplice. First, from his conversations they had ascertained that he knew accurately what was of real, and what of apparent value among the ornaments of the church; what was really of silver, and what only of baser metal; as he had often assisted as voluntary sacristan there, in his better days. They, on the contrary, had never taken more than a cursory glance at the riches accumulated in the sanctuary, enough to inflame their desires, but not to guide

them in the selection of spoil. But, farther, they had a still baser and blacker motive; they had only valued Pierrot as a tool; and having no farther use for his active services after that night, it was their intention to make him serviceable as a victim, by flying themselves, and leaving him behind to be seized on by public justice, so themselves to elude its pursuit. This connexion with them, who would, of course, be suspected, and the weakness of his character, which would make him at once own his guilt, would bring down upon him the vengeance of the law, which would thus be less eager in its search after them. Such were the fiendish feelings of his companions for him; such, in other words, is the friendship of the wicked!

The terrible menace of the ruffians was uttered with such rage, and yet in so determined a tone, that with Pierrot's experience of their character, he saw it was made in earnest, and would be unscrupulously carried into execution. His resolution failed him: the thought of all his past neglect and cruel abandonment of those whom in his secret heart he still loved, and actually reverenced, rushed upon him. Must he in the end prove their death—their murderer in some sort? He could not bear to think it; and in an agony of contending feelings, and with a protest to heaven, he chose what he thought the lesser curse, and consented to accompany his tyrants.

Time urged, for they had lost much of the night in this contention; but still it wanted some hours to day, and the robbers durst not now put off their enterprise. Silent and sullen they reached the church-door, and it was agreed that one should stay outside with the mule, and keep watch, while the leader with Pierrot should enter, and bring out the spoil.

They found the door unlocked; but this did not surprise them; for no one in the neighbourhood ever dreamt of the possibility of sacrilege. Cautiously and silently they opened it and entered in. Both paused upon the threshold, as if overawed; even the hardened robber seemed afraid to advance. So deeply still and silent was that lonely sanctuary, that Pierrot could actually hear his heart beat against his side, as it throbbed in remorse and fear. The flame of the lamp was burning bright and clear, and the entire holy place basked in its tempered radiance. Never, in his days of virtue, had it looked to him more sacred, more venerable, or more lovely than it did on this night of his basest treachery! Never did the silver and jewels of the altar beam more joyously, never did the saints from the walls look down upon him more softly, never did the image over the altar seem to gaze upon him with a sweeter, blander smile, than now that his mind was bent on sacrilege! "Ah, Judas!" they all seemed to say to him in words of soft reproof, "wilt thou betray the Spouse of the Son of Man with a kiss?" He could not bear the sight, and he cast his eyes upon the ground; and there he thought he saw his infant child, as she lay seven years before on the steps before him, slumbering once more the sleep of health, and himself kneeling in quiet gratitude beside her. Yes, every thing around him looked to him now just as it did then—all except his own breast; alas! how changed was that! He flung the vision, by a formidable effort, from his imagination, and raised his eyes; and in doing so, encountered the steady gaze of the lamp, which shed all this beauty and mysterious charm on every object. What the eye of a man—"the light of his body"—is to his other features, even *that* did the pure solitary flame of the sanctuary's lamp appear to Pierrot's mind: it was its eye, through which it looked keenly, yet mildly upon him; as if to see whether or no he would have heart to do his wicked deed. Whatever spell there is in the human eye to arrest the murderer's stroke, or the savage beast's assault; that same power did this eye of the Sanctuary exercise over his soul; it charmed and fixed him immoveable to the spot; not all the promises or threats of earth would have influenced him to attempt a crime, so long as it beamed upon him. Nay, to his sight, it was a super-human intelligence that darted from it; they were rays that penetrated into his bosom and pried into his heart, that came towards him from it; they had a voice that spoke, they had a point that pierced, though tenderly. However the beams might play around objects beyond and around, and dance and linger on their way, to him they came direct and rigid, and swift as arrows from a bow, cutting through the darkness between, and not enlightening it, but leaving it darkness still. Yes, it seemed to him as an angel's gaze; the look of the heavenly Watchman deputed to keep ward, and pay homage there, during the silent hours of night; the Guardian of the sacred treasure, but whose power was only to milden, to soften, but not to strike or to destroy. And even thus did that light more subdue him and make him coward. Sooner would he have faced, it seemed to him, a seraph brandishing a sword of fire, or angels with scourges in their hands, than this noiseless and harmless protector of the Sanctuary and its treasures. Is not grace about to triumph in him?

This succession of thoughts and feelings in Pierrot's mind, occupied in reality but a few moments; but these were quite enough to tire the patience of his companion, who, though clearly over-awed, had not the same associations to work,

nor the same heart to be worked on, as Pierrot. He soon broke in on the reverie which held him entranced, and shaking him by the arm, said in a whisper—yes, the ruffian durst not speak, in that light, in a higher tone:

"Come come, comrade, we are losing time, let us begin."

"I cannot," said Pierrot, in the same voice, "I dare not."

"Nonsense!" gruffly urged the robber; "are you a child? Remember your promise. To work, then, at once."

"I will not," replied his poor victim. "Not for the world, will I rob Her who here gave me back my daughter, on a night so like this."

"And do you wish to murder her on such a night too?" growled the savage, with set teeth, and the look of a tiger. "If you will not remember your promise, remember my threat. Ten minutes will take us to your house, and five more will finish our work there. Refuse, and in a quarter of an hour, you will be a childless widower."

Pierrot's heart quailed, his frame shuddered and quivered at the thought. The moment of grace was over; the demon had again triumphed, and in the recklessness of despair, he exclaimed,

"Be it so, then: let me accomplish my doom! To work; but not by this light: no, grant me this at least; not by this light."

"Why not?" asked the other. "Is it not enough?"

"Never mind," said Pierrot; "but not by this light. Let it be in total darkness, if you please: that would be better. But rather uncover your dark lantern, that will be best." And as he spoke, he shaded his eyes with his hand, that he might not see the lamp.

The robber, mutturing something to the effect, that he too did not like that light much, uncovered his lantern. Its lurid red gleam streaming through the coarse smoked glass, appeared at once to contaminate the chaste light that before illuminated the holy place. It was like a stream of blood defiling, on a sudden, a crystal fountain; or the glare of a burning cottage breaking into the summer moonlight. Yet it was comforting to Pierrot, and seemed to dispel his fears. His companion saw it, and cheered him on, saying,

"Come on, we must make up for lost time. I see you do not like that lamp. Ha! ha! we will get rid of it at once. It is silver, I have heard you say; so pull it down, and untie it, while I take down the candlesticks from the altar."

Pierrot had just the same thought. So with desperate resolution, and still shrouding his eyes, he advanced to the lamp, pulled it violently down, and, with one powerful breath, extinguished it.

In the same instant, a shriek rent his ears, so sudden, so sharp and so full of agony, that it did not seem to proceed from human utterance, but to come from some being of another world. Whether it came from afar or from near, from the sky above, or from the ground below, or from the country, neither he nor his companion could tell. For it was instantaneous, and was neither prolonged nor repeated. But so immediately did it follow, or rather accompany, the extinction of the lamp, that both Pierrot and his companion naturally connected the two occurrences together, as cause and effect.

(To be continued.)

FOR LENT.

Tell me no more of earth's gay scenes—
Of pleasures, while we wander here;
Away, these false delusive dreams,
And to the warnings of our God give ear.

Shall we delay our journey home,
To gaze on trifles by the way,
And lose our bright, immortal crown,
For transient, fleeting, things of clay.

Our time is granted us, for why?
To use the talents God has given;
Shall we, then, idly lay them by,
And lose our cherish'd hope of Heaven!

O let us flee these ways of sin,
And in our youth remember God;
The way's reveal'd, let's walk therein,
And place our trust in Jesus' blood.

Hope, hope in Jesus, he who died
On Calvary's Cross our souls to save;
Our highest hopes he'll not deride,
But grant us all we ask or crave.

Virgin, most glorious, chaste, and pure,
Help my weak prayers to him with thine;
O, beg thy Son to keep me sure,
And lead me where his glories shine!

When death benumbs this mortal clay,
Reward my trust, O Lord, in thee;
And in the dreadful judgment day,
Jesus, my God, remember me.

A FLAKE OF SNOW.

When storms and showers of snow "deform the day delightless," we may find entertainment in studying the shape, or rather the arrangement of a flake of snow. It is vapour in a state of crystallization, having undergone this process in the magazine of vapour from whence it came. Each flake is a collection of crystals, which are often disposed in the form of a six-rayed star, and thus divide the circle of 360 degrees into angles, which approach more or less to sixty degrees. These six rays diverge into secondary branches at the aforesaid angle from each other. The hoar-frost consists of two kinds; one, in which it shoots into needle-like points, when it is said to be *spicular*, and perhaps is caused by the vapour which congeals at the moment of coming into contact with the object; the other kind consists of minute grains from the dew, which was turned to a solid as it rested upon the herbage.

RECONCILIATION.

Among various edifying cases which I witnessed in the course of my mission, the following shows how God, in his ineffable goodness, was pleased, by means of my youthful ardour, to compose a deadly feud which distracted a whole family:—

An old man of that place, with six of his sons, had for several years sought the life of a relative who had murdered his seventh son. Neither the exhortations of several ecclesiastics nor the authority of Cardinal Barberini and other distinguished personages who had interposed, had been sufficient to reconcile them. The unfortunate murderer wandered day and night about the mountains and forests to escape from his pursuers. Various persons informed me of this circumstance, and solicited me to do my utmost to pacify the family. The fugitive himself, accompanied by several of his friends, all in arms, came down from the mountains under cover of the night, to entreat me to the same effect.

I waited till Easter, when I knew that his uncle and cousins would come to confession. The latter did, one after the other, come to my feet, and I exhorted them to peace. They all replied that they bore no hatred in their hearts to the assassin, and that they were ready to forgive him, if the permission of their father, in whose power they were, could be obtained. Last of all, the father came to confession; and after I had admonished him at great length, he told me that he did not entertain any resentment against his nephew, but that he wished justice to take its course. I at once understood his object in this subterfuge, and therefore commanded him to repeat the Lord's Prayer, which he did, not suspecting my intentions. When he came to the words, "And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us," I desired him to explain their force and meaning; whereupon, by the Divine grace, he burst into a flood of tears. Having recovered his composure, he promised to pardon and embrace his nephew, for the love of Jesus Christ, the first time he should meet him. As, however, I feared that his resolution might be a transient ebullition rather than a holy purpose, I sent secretly to the fugitive nephew, directing him to conceal himself in the belfry on a certain evening, when I intended to preach upon the subject of love to our enemies, and if in the course of the sermon I should call him, fearlessly to come forward, accompanied by the rector and his other friends.

By the divine assistance, my efforts were crowned with the happiest results. At about dusk, when I had finished my sermon upon love to our enemies, at which all the injured family were present, I intimated that the women might go home in peace, and that the men only should remain to do penance. I then caused the door of the church to be locked, and in a short discourse I exhorted them to self-castigation. After this, the crucifix, as I had previously arranged, was brought out of the sacristy, and borne between two lighted torches. At the same time I repeated the most cogent arguments which I had used in my sermon, and urged the congregation to put in practice what they had heard, pardoning each other, and embracing in sign of peace. Many who had been at variance then came and embraced each other at my feet. Such was the emotion and the fervour of the congregation that they were all in tears. Perceiving among them the uncle of the assassin, I called him by name, and he immediately came and threw himself at my feet. I asked him in the presence of all whether he really forgave his nephew, and he replied in a deliberate tone that he did. I inquired if he promised this in the name of Jesus Christ, whose image he then held in his hand; and he answered in the affirmative. I made him repeat this several times in a loud voice. Then I blessed him, his family, and all his concerns, in the name of our Lord, for the great satisfaction he gave to God, and to all the court of Heaven, by granting pardon, for the love of Christ, to the man by whom he had been injured: and finally I asked him, if at that moment his culpable nephew were on his knees to ask forgiveness, for the love of Christ, how he would act? He replied that he would gladly take him to his heart. I then made the signal agreed upon, and the offender was conducted by the rector into my presence. As soon as he was seen approaching, the sobbing of the people increased. The old man was greatly surprised at this, for he stood with his back to the entrance, and did not see his nephew, who, however, the next moment fell at his feet, craving pardon, for the love of Christ. At first the old man stood motionless, struck with surprise. He seemed bewildered by the extraordinary scene, and knew not what to do. I endeavoured to calm him; and, with the crucifix in my hand, I reiterated my arguments to induce him to forgiveness, till, urged by the grace that was working in him, he suddenly embraced his nephew, kissed and pardoned him, and gave him his benediction. His example was instantly followed by his sons, who, one after the other, sobbing and weeping, embraced their cousin, while all the congregation, bathed in tears, blessed and praised God.—*Father Ripa's Residence at the Court of Peking.*

FUNERAL OF WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

The attendants plundered the royal chamber, stripped the body even of its last garments; sons, kinsmen, servants, all, without exception, rushing out, left the poor deceased corpse lying on the floor. So completely was it abandoned, that the duty of conveying the remains of William to the monastery of St. Stephen, at Caen, which he had founded, was performed by the care and charity of a knight of humbler fortune and low degree, grieved at the indignity to which the mortal spoil of his sovereign was exposed. The monks came forth with song and dirge, and receiving the body, they took order for the royal sepulture. The grave was dug deep in the presbytery, between altar and choir. All the bishops and abbots of Normandy assembled. After mass had been sung, Gilbert, bishop of Evreux, addressed the people; and when he had magnified the fame of the departed, he asked them all to pray for his soul. And then a loud voice was heard from the crowd:—a poor man stood up before the bier, one Ascelin, who forbade that William's corpse should be received into the ground he had usurped by reckless violence. The land whereon the church of St. Stephen stood—the monastery, whose erection was amongst the good works upon which William relied—had been taken by William from Arthur, the father of Ascelin, and any compensation had been denied. All present, bishops and nobles, all the bystanders indeed, knew how sadly true was the complaint; and they pacified Ascelin by paying him the price of that narrow little plot of earth, the seven feet of mould, the contested resting-place of the Conqueror. Ascelin, farther promises being made to him, withdrew his ban, but as the swollen corpse sank into the grave, it burst, filling the sacred edifice with corruption. The obsequies were hurried through; and thus was William the Conquerer gathered to his fathers—with loathing, disgust, and horror.—*Quarterly Review.*

THE PLAGUE AT MILAN.

CHAPTER III.

What St. Charles did in the time of the Plague, to assist the Milanese.

When St. Charles was returned to his palace, he entered his room, where, his heart pierced with grief, he leaned against the wall, and looking on those who had accompanied him on this sad visit to the hospital, he addressed them in the following words: "Have you reflected upon the pitiable state of these poor people, who are not only afflicted with the evil of the plague, and abandoned by all the world, but, what is most deplorable, who find themselves deprived of all the helps of religion, so that there are not even Priests who have compassion on them in so great a need? I am perhaps the cause of this, because I have not begun myself assisting them, and animated others by my example. Therefore, if God in his mercy does not send some one to succour them, whatever may be said, I know what I ought to do on such an emergency." These words moved the hearts of all who heard them, and gave them to understand that he was disposed not to spare his own life to succour these poor sick people, and to administer the Holy Sacraments himself to them. He had already begun to distribute great charities, to provide for the necessities of the poor in the city; but when he had seen with his own eyes the sad spectacle at St. Gregory's, he judged that he ought to extend them still more. He was not satisfied with giving away all the money he had, he gave also a part of his furniture, and sent whatever he thought would be useful to the hospital, even his own bed. He had his silver plate turned into money, and distributed it among the poor. But as all he could do of himself did not suffice for the necessities of so many, he had collections made in Milan, and the other towns and villages of his diocese, and the neighbouring states; so that in temporal matters he provided sufficiently for the public and for St. Gregory. And, as for spiritual aid, seeing the ecclesiastics of Milan shutting themselves up in their houses for fear of the plague, he was obliged to send for Priests from other parts of his diocese, subject in temporals to the Swiss laws, because they did not fear the plague more than any common malady; and he placed them in the hospital of St. Gregory, which was a very great comfort to the sick. But this did not suffice; for the number of sick increasing every day, and the Priests of the city, who ought to have taken care of them, flying from the evil, he had recourse to the Monks, hoping to find them more disposed to help them, as being more detached from the world, and in a state of greater perfection. Some showed a repugnance to assist, and others more zealous offered themselves with fervour, if they could obtain the permission of their superiors. This consoled the charitable Pastor much. He also exhorted all the clergy to have compassion, to assist these poor people with their alms, if they could do no more. In this manner not a few were touched by his discourses to offer themselves, and all they had, for the sick. The holy Cardinal took down their names, in order to employ them as occasion should require; he gave them great praise, and promised them, in God's name, an eternal and infinite recompense for so good and holy a resolution. As he was to visit those who were infected, and required assistance, and some to be in his house with him, he resolved to choose them from his own servants who were most prudent, and who would not expose themselves rashly. As it was reported in the city that the plague made such ravages, because sufficient care was not taken to avoid the infection, he ordered his household to keep themselves retired, and not to speak with him, refusing any other company than those who exposed themselves with him. When he was on the point of making this selection, he found a great difficulty; for all his servants having foreseen it, had conspired together not to attend him, being either afraid of their own death, or that they thought by this abandonment to put it out of his power to expose himself; they not thinking him obliged to run so imminent risk of his life. But as, when the service of God was in question, he never gave up on the first difficulties, but, on the contrary, endeavoured to surmount them, he assembled those whom he thought best adapted to accompany him, and spoke to them with so much unction, that they could not resist him; and they were so moved by his discourse, that they placed themselves entirely under his direction, and esteemed themselves very happy that he would associate with them in so good a work, frankly confessing the resolution they had made before not to assist him. Then he assembled all his servants, and made them a very pathetic exhortation, thereby confirming those in their resolution who had agreed to follow him, and giving them rules by which they might be useful to their neighbours without fear of taking the disease; and to the others of his family who remained at home, he gave the necessary advice for their own preservation, and to appease the anger of God by prayer, fasting, and other good works. From the time he exposed himself to visit the sick, and administer the Sacraments to them, he commanded all those under him not to approach him, and to have no communication with him. For this reason he had a wand carried before him, even out of the house, that those who were not sick, might not come too near him, or his companions, who were eight in number. And that his house might be open to all, he had a kind of balustrade put up, where he gave audience, in order that he might be spoken to from a distance. He had the same precaution in the choir of the Cathedral, for the sake of his Canons, and other ecclesiastics, for whatever affairs he might have; and although "he wished to be looked upon as infected with the plague, he would always assist at the Divine Office." A visible blessing from God was the reward of this conduct, for neither he, nor any of those who always followed him, were attacked with the plague, though he was constantly in the most infected places. But three of those who remained in the palace died, from not having observed the advice that had been given them. Considering that the sick increased every

day, and that the order he had established for the spiritual aid of the sick, was not sufficient, inasmuch as the greater number of Priests refused to administer the Sacraments to them, he consulted the Pope, to know if he could oblige them to it by ecclesiastical reasons. He wrote to a person at Rome for this purpose, and begged him to propose the affair to his Holiness and the most learned divines, to know their opinion, and to try to obtain several favours and indulgences for the sick, and those who attended upon them. Considering that his own life was in great danger, he humbly asked for himself and his successor, that they might participate in the indulgences he asked for others, and that his Holiness would remember him and his poor flock in his prayers, and beg of God to deliver them from the scourge, which was a just punishment of their horrid crimes. He also begged of the Pope to write a Pastoral Letter to his people, exhorting the sick to patience, and to animate those in health to fervour, and to assist the poor in their misery, and to warn both to profit by this occasion given them by our Lord, in His mercy, as well as by His justice, to satisfy for their sins, and to merit eternal life. As there were other cities in the Duchy of Milan suspected of the plague, he entreated his Holiness to warn the Bishops to remain in them, and to watch like good shepherds over their flocks, and generously expose their lives for their salvation, to give them good example, and to relieve them in their distress. His friend laid before the Pope all the petitions of the Cardinal. The Holy Father was grieved to find that a person whom he loved so well, should be exposed to so great a danger; but he was obliged to extol the charity, and zeal, and courage which he evinced for the good of his people. He granted all his requests, and promised to protect and assist him in every way—he praised him for his intrepid courage and extraordinary charity, and begged him to take care of himself, not to expose himself rashly, and not to perform functions which might be committed to others; and consider, that the safety and happiness of the greatest portion of his people depended upon him under God, and that if he died, his loss would be irreparable to the city and diocese of Milan, and indeed to the whole Church. St. Charles received with joy all the favours the Pope granted him, especially the Pastoral Letter addressed to the people of Milan, wherein his Holiness exhorted them to receive in the spirit of penance the scourge which it pleased God to inflict on them, and to have recourse to His mercy by prayers, fasts, and mortifications; and showing them from several passages from the Holy Fathers, and by pressing reasons, the obligation they were under of assisting each other on such occasions. He caused this letter, together with several other homilies, &c. on the same subject, to be translated, and he added to it the account of the generous manner in which St. Bernardine of Sienna had exposed himself to assist his neighbours on a similar occasion. He then assembled the Priests and Ecclesiastics of the city, and with words full of the spirit of God, he exhorted them to despise their own lives, and to practise Christian virtues, especially charity, for the sick, offering to show them the example, and to place himself always foremost amongst them. He had not yet received the decision of Rome, but he showed them clearly the obligation they were under to administer the Sacraments to the sick; he promised them that he would never abandon them, and would himself attend them if any fell sick. The grace of God touched the hearts of all, and especially of the Priests, who all, from that time, promised to fulfil their duties more worthily; and several were generous enough to expose their lives where there was most danger. He learned that a very small number had proved cowardly, and had not dared to approach the sick, to administer the Sacraments; he gave them a reprimand in private, and threatened them with some visible punishment from God, which reprimand strengthened them, so that they overcame the fear of death, and performed their duties more carefully.

At that time, a good Priest of St. Gregory's performed a generous and heroic action, which deserves to be recorded. A poor man, who was still living, had been thrown among the dead, and they had carried him with the dead bodies, in a cart, to the public burial-ground, near the hospital of St. Gregory—there he had been left in the midst of a heap of dead bodies, sixty or seventy, which were to be buried the next morning, with religious ceremonies. This Priest passing by early in the morning with the Holy Viaticum, which he was carrying to the sick, the poor man heard the sound of the bell, raised himself on his knees, and turning towards the Priest with an ardent desire of receiving his Divine Saviour once more; he said in a dying voice, "*Ah! my Father, for the love of God, permit me once more to receive the Blessed Sacrament.*" That was almost all he could utter in his extremity, but it was enough to show the great desire he had that his soul should once more be fed and strengthened with the celestial Bread. The Priest was much astonished, but the God whom he carried in his hands strengthened him; he did not hesitate, and walking over a heap of dead bodies, he approached the dying man, who received the Holy Sacrament with great respect, and then laid himself down in the same place, where he expired a moment after, in all probability to go and enjoy the visible presence of Him whom he had received under the Sacramental species: this may be conjectured from the visible favour of God, who came to visit him in so extraordinary a manner. This was no less admirable for the ardent desire the poor man had to receive his Divine Saviour, than for the generosity of the Priest, and the contempt he showed for the fear of death on that occasion. The fame of this action soon spread through the city, as a rare example of courage and strength of mind.

St. Charles having obtained of the Priests, and even of seculars, to take more care of the sick, he prescribed for them the manner of administering the Sacraments with due reverence, and of assisting them without danger. Whilst he was thus labouring for the good of the city, he remarked that all persons of rank retired to their country-seats, fearing the infection;

and this was the cause that no one was found to give relief by their credit or authority in its greatest necessities. He begged of those who still remained, to come and see him; and he spoke to them so efficaciously, that they resolved to remain and assist their fellow-citizens in the absence of the governor, who would not return, nor take any care of the miserable people. He gave all necessary orders for the temporal affairs, and divided the city into several parts, giving to each a governor, who had other officers under him, who visited carefully all the houses of the sick and poor, to see what was wanting to them, and to relieve them. But whilst every thing went on well as to order, and these deputies provided every thing necessary for the poor, there rose a dispute between the officers of the king, and those of the city, as to the expense, each party wishing to pay nothing. Besides the scandal which this division caused, the poor suffered much from it; no one during that time, taking care of them, or furnishing them with means of subsistence. The Holy Cardinal, who had spent all his own money, as well as that which he had received from the collections, was extremely afflicted to see them abandoned without being able to bring a remedy, or to find means to put an end to the dispute.

In this affliction he had recourse to prayer, and begged of God to show forth the usual effects of His Divine Providence, and to help his poor people in this pressing necessity. Fortunately it happened at that time, that the governor was obliged to come to Milan, for some important affairs he had to propose to the senate. St. Charles wrote to him, and boldly reproved him for having abandoned the city in so hazardous an occasion; and threatened him with some visible punishment from God, if he did not provide for the wants of a great number of poor, whom he could no longer assist; and if he did not forbid all those to go out of the city whose duty it was to watch over its government. One of the eight persons whom St. Charles had chosen for his companions, presented this letter to the governor, in the senate-house, who was so struck with the menaces it contained, that he immediately treated with the senate on the manner in which they might provide for the wants of the poor; and it was agreed, that the magistrates of Police should defray the necessary expenses: by this means the dispute was settled, the poor were assisted, and the holy Archbishop was much consoled and satisfied.

(To be continued.)

THE PROOF-HOUSE AT BIRMINGHAM.

All muskets manufactured at Birmingham must be submitted to a test imposed by government, which takes place in what is called the Proof-house. Muskets that have stood this test are stamped. I went to see this interesting proof-house. I was told that every musket was there filled with a charge five times as powerful as that which it was expected to carry when in ordinary use. There are rooms in which the proofing cartridges are prepared, others in which the muskets are loaded, and a place, called the Hole, where they are discharged. This is managed in the following manner: the loaded muskets, 100 or 120 at a time, are placed side by side upon a low scaffolding, upon which it is possible to fasten them completely. Their mouths are turned towards the inner wall of the room, where the bullets fly into a heap of sand. The walls of the room are of great strength and thickness, and the doors and windows strongly barricaded with iron. A train of powder is then laid, running over the touch-hole of each piece to a small opening, where it is fired. On the occasion of my visit, 120 muskets, intended for the navy, were tried. These are of larger calibre than those of use in the army. After the discharge had taken place, a little time was allowed for the smoke to clear away before we entered the proof-house, where we found that seven barrels had burst, but that 113 had stood the test. The superintendent of the establishment told me, that sometimes as many as twenty out of a hundred would burst, but very often also fewer than seven. If we take five or six per cent as the average, it gives us a high idea of the excellent workmanship of English gun-makers. We were told that, not long ago, a workman, who had been detected in some peculation, found means to secrete himself in the proof-room, where he placed his body immediately in front of the battery. He was found quite dead, and pierced by six bullets.—*Kohl's England.*

AN ADVENTURE WITH A WOLF.

The next morning, Captain Sinclair would have accompanied the Miss Percivals on their milking expedition; but, as his services were required to haul up the fishing-punt, he was obliged to go down with all the rest of the men to assist. Percival and John were the only ones left at home with Mrs. Campbell. John, after a time, having as usual rubbed down his rifle, threw it on his shoulder, and, calling the dogs which lay about, sallied forth for a walk, followed by the whole pack except old Sancho, who invariably accompanied the girls to the cow-house. Mary and Emma tripped over the new-beaten snow-path to the cow-house merry and cheerful, with their pails in their hands; Emma laughing at Captain Sinclair's disappointment at not being permitted to accompany them. They had just arrived at the cow-house when old Sancho barked furiously, and sprang to the side of the building behind them, and in a moment afterwards rolled down the snow heap which he had sprung over, holding on and held fast by a large black wolf. The struggle was not very long; and during the time that it lasted, the girls were so panic-struck, that they remained like statues within two yards of the animals. Gradually the old dog was overpowered by the repeated snapping bites of the wolf, yet he fought nobly to the last, when he dropped under the feet of the wolf, his tongue hanging out, bleeding profusely and lifeless. As soon as his adversary was overpowered, the enraged animal, with his feet upon the body of the dog, bristling his hair and showing his powerful teeth, was evidently about to attack the young women. Emma threw her arm round Mary's waist, advancing her body so as to save her sister. Mary attempted the same, and then they remained waiting in horror for the expected spring of the animal, when of a sudden the other dogs came rushing forward, cheered on by John, and flew upon the animal. Their united strength soon tore him down to the ground; and John coming up, as the wolf defended himself against his new assailants, put the muzzle of his rifle to the animal's head, and shot it dead. The two sisters had held up during the whole of this alarming struggle; but as soon as they perceived the wolf was dead and that they were safe, Mary could stand no longer, and sank down on her knees, supporting her sister, who had become insensible.—*Captain Marryatt's Settlers in Canada.*

A TALE OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

Once upon a time, there was a certain king who took it into his head to have a throne, or a chair, or a saddle, of some peculiar pattern, which, as far as I know, has never been described; but whatever it might be, he could find no artificer who would undertake to execute his conceptions.

Now it so happened that shortly before this time, a young artist had come to the place where the king held his court. He had been brought up, and for some years employed, by an eminent goldsmith, who was master of the mint in what might then be called another country. I do not find any reason assigned for this migration of the young workman, who perhaps only went (like the mechanics of a great part of Europe even now) on a *wanderschaft*, to acquire more perfect knowledge of his art. He seems, however, to have left home with a good character, as one who was loved and respected by those among whom he lived, not only for extraordinary skill as a workman, but for the simplicity of his manners, and his strict and regular piety. Whether he owed it to his professional skill, or to his character, or to some introduction which is not recorded, I do not know; but in a few days after his arrival at the place where the court was, he was taken under the patronage of the king's treasurer; under whose protection he set to work at his business, and soon made friends of all around him. The treasurer was naturally consulted by his royal master on the golden project which filled his mind; and he, as naturally, thought of the young stranger. He conferred with him, and reported to the king that he had found an artist who would undertake the business.

The king was delighted; and gave an order to the treasurer for an ample quantity of gold, which he faithfully delivered to the goldsmith, who immediately set to work. He wrought with great diligence, and with such ingenuity and honesty, that from the materials which he received for one saddle, he made two. This, though apparently impossible, he was able to do, because he not only used the materials very skilfully, but abstained from the common practice of cheating under pretence of waste occasioned by cutting, filing, and melting. When he had completed them, he took one of the saddles to the king, who was filled with admiration. He praised the elegance of the work, and ordered a suitable reward to be given to the artist; who thereupon brought forth the other saddle, and told his majesty that he had thought it better to make up what was over in that manner than to waste it. The king was astonished, and, at first, incredulous; but, finding that he had really made both saddles from the materials delivered to him for one, he not only praised his skill, but assured him that he should from thenceforth consider him worthy of confidence in greater matters. In fact, this was the first step of his advancement at court; and, from that time forward, he not only rose to the highest eminence in his art, but increased in favour with the king and his nobles. In a word, he seems to have been in much the same circumstances as those of George Heriot at the court of our James, and to have enjoyed the same personal favour, or, perhaps, I should say, royal friendship.

It appears to have been soon after this, and it was probably an occasion of his being appointed to some confidential situation, or employed in some business of state, that he was required to take an oath on the relics of the saints in the presence of his sovereign. "I do not know how it happened," says his friend and biographer, "that I was present at the time; but it may be naturally supposed that I was likely to be there in the way of my duty, for I was brought up in my childhood at that king's court;" and he proceeds to relate, that the goldsmith respectfully, but firmly, refused to comply with the requisition. His majesty was urgent; and the poor goldsmith, seeing no alternative but to disobey either God or the king (and each was considered a sin in those days), burst into tears. The king had the good sense to give way—to speak to him in a kind and soothing manner—and to dismiss him with a cheerful countenance, and an assurance that he should feel more confidence in him than if he had sworn all sorts of oaths—"pollicens se plus eum ex hoc jam crediturum quam si multimoda tunc dedisset juramenta."

Shortly after this, he seems to have entered on a more strictly religious life, which he commenced by a general confession of his sins, and a course of great austerity. "Having arrived," says his biographer, "at the age of full maturity, he desired to manifest himself as a vessel sanctified for the service of God;" and he adds, that "he began stoutly to resist the striving of the flesh by the fervour of the Spirit," that is, according to the apostle, in labours, in watchings, in fastings, in chastity, in much patience, and in charity unfeigned; for in opposition to the present desires of the flesh, he set before him the fires of future punishment, and the consideration of the fire of hell kept out the heat of concupiscence. He prayed without ceasing for heavenly gifts, and offered his supplications to God by day and by night, frequently repeating from the book of Job—"I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause, which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number....to set up on high those that be low; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety." He restricted himself from fulness of bread, that he might gain the bread of heaven. His face, indeed, was pale with fasting, his body dry and withered; but his mind glowed with ever-increasing love of his heavenly country. The consideration of more heavy evils made him bear light afflictions with patience; for, habitually looking forward to the end of his present life, he feared the future sentence of God, and his tremendous judgment, knowing that it is written, "Happy is the man that feareth alway" (Prov. xxviii. 14), and that of the apostle, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Philip. ii. 12). Also that saying of Job, "For I have alway feared God like as the waves swelling over me." (c. xxxi. 23). By night he would lie at the feet of his Lord, smiting his breast with his hands, and watering his cheeks with tears; and with eyes uplifted and suppressed sighs did he look to Him whom he feared to have offended—and many a time did he repeat, "Against thee only have I sinned"—"have mercy upon me according to thy loving kindness" (Ps. li. 4, 1); and that of Job, "O remember that my life is wind" (viii. 7); and "let me alone, for my days are vanity" (17); and, being, as it were, out of himself, he pictured to his own mind that which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man, but which God hath prepared for those who love him.

The reader is not, however, to suppose, that the artist, and the man of business and active benevolence, was lost in the ascetic. The goldsmith, it is true, came to have a very monkish appearance, and was commonly to be seen in very mean clothes, with a rope for his girdle. His biographer confesses, that when he first came to court, he did, indeed, somewhat ruffle it in the bravery of silk, and gold, and gems; but even then, adds this bosom friend, who was in all his secrets, and who was, as I have said, brought up at the court—who was, in fact, a little scion of nobility, and induced by his admiration of the goldsmith to embrace a religious life, and who, with his brother, became, as he tells us, one heart and one soul with him—even then, says his biographer, his finery concealed a hair shirt. Still, however, though his finery was laid aside, and his dress and manners approached to the monastic, he was not less diligent in business than fervent in spirit. He wrought incessantly with his own hands at his trade, with a book open before him, having, it seems, constructed for this purpose a sort of revolving desk, by means of which he could bring before him a number of books in succession; and moreover, though a working man, and a reading man, and a man high in office and in court favour, he appears to have been always ready for, and constantly engaged in, works of active benevolence.

It is not my present business to enter into all the details of the goldsmith's life; or to tell how the favour and confidence of his first royal master was continued by his son and successor. I pass over the accounts which his biographer gives of the favours which his sovereign heaped upon him, and which he so freely bestowed in acts of charity, that, if a stranger inquired for him (and what stranger came to that

city who did not?) the natural answer was, "Go into such a quarter, and where you see a crowd of poor people you will find him." The goldsmith had other and, I suppose, much greater expenses. One of these arose from what his time and circumstances rendered a very obvious Christian duty. His mode of performing it might now be considered singular and unwise; and perhaps, as it was not adopted by some of those who have, in modern times, felt most strongly (or, at least, talked and written most fiercely) about the abolition of slavery, it may be liable to serious objections which I do not perceive. To me, a very poor judge in such matters, and perhaps somewhat prejudiced, it seems that his plan, whatever faults it might have, was the most simple, certain, and expeditious—he put his hand in his pocket, and paid the price of redemption. It was not the grandest way of doing the thing; but he lived in a dark age, when, even if the thing itself could have been successfully carried on, the collateral benefits of philanthropy and political agitation were little understood. Right or wrong, however, his biographer tells us, that when he heard of a sale of slaves, he set off immediately, and bought as many as twenty or thirty, or even fifty or an hundred at a time. When he had got them, the next business was to carry them before the king, and set them at full liberty with all the forms of law. When they had thus become their own masters, he suggested to them three courses, and helped them to take which they pleased, if they chose to take either. In the first place, if they chose to return home, he was ready to give them all the assistance in his power—secondly, any who wished to remain with him, he willingly allowed to do so; and it was rather on the footing of brethren than of servants—thirdly, if he could persuade them to become monks, he treated them with great respect, honoured them as a class superior to that to which he belonged, supplied them with clothes, and all other necessaries, sent them to different monasteries, and took a great deal of care of them.

All this was, no doubt, very expensive; but it was not all. He asked the king to give him a certain town, that he might there build a ladder by which they might both get to heaven. His majesty granted it at once; and he built a monastery capable of receiving a hundred and fifty monks. He spent upon it "all that he had, all that he could get from the king, all that he could honestly come by in any way, and all that the great were willing to give." His biographer says, "You might see waggons heavily laden with vessels of brass and wood for all purposes, bedding, table-linen, a great number of religious books, and, indeed, every thing necessary for the monastery; insomuch that some evil-minded persons were moved to envy;" and, having himself inspected the place, he speaks in high terms of the order and discipline maintained in it. He adds, "There is now a great company there, adorned with all the flowers of various graces. There are also many artificers skilled in divers arts, who, being perfected in the fear of Christ, are always prepared to yield ready obedience. No man there claims anything as his own; but (as we read in the Acts of the Apostles) all things are, in all respects, common. And the place is so fertile and so beautiful, that any body going there, amidst its wide orchards and pleasant gardens, might well exclaim, 'How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! like shady woods, as cedar trees beside the waters, as gardens by the river side.' It is of such that Solomon has said, 'The habitations of the righteous shall be blessed;'" and he goes on to describe how it was surrounded by an inclosure (not, indeed, a stone wall, but a bank, with ledge and ditch—sphærico muro, non quidem lapideo; sed fossatum sepe munitum), about a mile and a quarter in circumference; and how the excellent river on which it was situated, with all the beauties of wood, water, and precipice, combined (perhaps one should say contrasted) with the inclosure of the monastery, entirely filled with fruit-bearing trees, might almost make the spectator fancy that he saw paradise before him.

To return to the goldsmith; and it will be a very natural mode of transition if I say a few words of his foreman—at least I suppose him to have held that rank from his being placed first in the list of the goldsmith's workmen, which his biographer gives, and his stating that he used to sit opposite his master at work. He was a foreigner of good family, who had been brought away from his own country in his childhood, and sold as a slave. Happily for him, he was purchased by the goldsmith, who sent him to this new monastery which he had founded, to be educated, and then took him back, and they worked and read together. So matters went on, until the goldsmith gave up business; and then what could the foreman do but go back to the scene of his youth, and turn monk? At least he did so; and, by direction of his old master, he became a priest also. Whether it was out of respect to their founder, or whether the same qualities which had endeared him to his master won the affection and respect of the abbot and monks, or whether it was commanded by the mild virtues of rigid austerities which had become habitual to him, I cannot tell; but, in fact, he received so much attention and honour that he did not know what to do with himself in the monastery, and seems to have remained there only out of respect for his benefactor; for, as soon as ever he heard of his death, he fairly ran away. Two texts of Scripture seem to have harassed his mind, and made him fear lest in his popularity with men he should lose the favour of God—"They that please men; they are ashamed because God hath despised them," (Ps. liii. 5); and the words of the apostle—"If I yet please men I should not be the servant of Christ." (Gal. i. 10). He wandered alone through desert places until he found a remote, and almost inaccessible, spot among the rocks, which he could only approach on his hands and knees, but which offered the necessary supply of wild fruits and water. "There he lived," says his biographer, "always singing in his heart that of David—'Oh that I had wings like a dove; for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo! then would I wander afar off, and remain in the wilderness' —'As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?' For he was such a man as Jeremiah describes when he says, 'It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him;' and elsewhere, 'I sat alone because of thy hand, for thou hast filled me with indignation.' Knowing, however, the dangers of idleness, and the apostolic injunction, that he who would not work should not eat, he employed himself in cultivating the earth; and soon found farther occupation in preaching to the multitudes who came to visit him, and to seek his prayers and instruction. I believe that only one of his sermons is in print. That it is quite original I do not vouch; neither will I take upon me to say that it contains all and omits nothing that it should contain, for that is more than I can say of any sermon that I ever saw or heard; but I am not writing controversially, and merely wish, on this occasion, to tell the reader, as a matter of fact, what he did say; and according to the specimen given by his biographer, it was as follows:—'Brethren, hear what I say with attention; and sedulously meditate on it in your hearts. God the Father, and his Son our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave his precious blood for us, you must love with all your soul, and with all your mind. Keep your hearts clean from wicked and impure thoughts; maintain brotherly love among yourselves, and love not the things that are in the world. Do not think about what you *have* but what you *are*. Do you desire to hear what you are? The prophet tells you, saying—'All flesh is grass; all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field.' Consider how short the present life is; always fearing, have the day of judgment before your eyes. While there is opportunity, redeem your sins by alms and good works.'" Such, says his biographer, were his discourses; and if the reader cannot agree with him in adding, "sermo ejus mellifluus sufficienti sale erat conditus," he may yet join me in hoping that he spoke truly in saying, that "no corrupt or idle discourse at any time proceeded out of his mouth; never was anything on his lips but Christ, and peace, and mercy."

As he grew old, his thoughts turned again to the monastery which he had twice left, and he besought the abbot to build a little cell near it in honour of its founder, and to let him live there. The abbot accordingly built one, rather more than half a mile from the monastery, and there the old man

lived, constantly employed in reading or praying, or some work of Christian duty or benevolence, or some handicraft, until he was ninety-four years old. I do not know that he ever worked miracles. One of his biographers gives them to him; but another account is not only very sparing on that point, but relates an anecdote which has quite an opposite aspect. When a certain woman, who was grievously wounded, went to the gate of the monastery, asking to see him, "he would by no means see her, but sent her back this message:—'Woman, why do you ask my help? I am a mortal, and your associate in infirmity; but, if you believe in Christ, whom I serve, go away and pray to God according to your faith, and you will be healed.' Immediately she went away believing; and having without delay called on Jesus, returned home healed."—*Maitland.*

Of the happy deaths of those so devoted in life to God and their neighbours it would be useless to speak.

THE RUBRICAL CONTROVERSY.

[Two or three years ago questions about *articles of faith* were discussed by the clergy and members of the church established in this country, and the Catholic world watched with interest and prayer the controversy, hoping that it might lead to that for which our Lord so earnestly prayed, unity of belief and worship. Alas! how miserably has the discussion gone off during the last twelve months! Whether a surplice should be worn or not, or an offertory made in the churches, are almost the only subjects of consideration now among them, and these are argued with a fury often worthier of a battle-field than of things of God. The following letter from the "*English Churchman*" expresses some reasonable regrets at the controversy having taken such a trifling turn.]

"Allow me to offer a remark on the Rubrical Controversy, so much agitating us now. I simply speak what many high Churchmen—high Churchmen of a strong stamp, to my own knowledge, feel on the subject. That feeling, Mr. Editor, differs in some degree from your own, and that of many of your correspondents; but I think it only right and fair that it should be expressed.

"Many persons of strong Church feeling, Mr. Editor, do most deeply and seriously regret the way in which the Church movement among us is now going off into, and expending itself in, externals. The most vital questions of doctrine, the most awfully important and turning points of discipline and practice, seem really to be giving way to contests about outsides, and things of mere form and detail to be becoming the bones of contention. I call them forms and outsides, for, apart from the Church spirit and life, what else are they? What signifies the preaching in a surplice, except the surplice is a pledge for good doctrine? What signifies the offertory, except it is a pledge for a deeper reverence for the altar and the communion? Why do we want to put our alms on the altar at all—why is that particular act a point of importance at all, except that we think the altar holy, and reverence what is celebrated upon it? If so, then teach reverence for the altar first—bring the congregation *round* the altar—bring the members of the Church to the communion—do this first. Instil a feeling, create a religious atmosphere first, and then give it its outward expression; then call in the external dress and token. Ecclesiastical feeling will take the ecclesiastical dress in time, if it continues: Church doctrine will prefer a surplice to an academical or Genevan gown; the more frequent communion will raise the feeling for the altar to the mind, and sanctify it as the receptacle of our alms. The offertory and the communion will take place together, and we shall have no need to separate the two. But in the mean time, with our present divisions of doctrine, and with our present infrequency of communion, I must say I cannot care much either for the surplice or for the offertory. I do not mean to disparage Church externals in the least. Where they are the result of an improved spirit, where a congregation as a whole receives and falls in with them, where they have no positively inimical feeling prevailing to contend with, let a clergyman, according to his discretion, introduce them. They will give definiteness and stimulus to Church principle. But this forced, far-fetched, artificial introduction of them, these sharp efforts, and this pull and squeeze to bring in a few isolated Church externals, does appear to me an unbecoming and undignified process. I make no reflection on the individual clergymen who have thought it their duty to make these efforts. I am speaking of the aspect in which the Church, as a whole, is put by them; the Church, as a whole, is put into an undignified position by them; the Church movement which has been going on amongst us is lowered in people's eyes. I can conceive an attached follower of this whole revival of Church principles beginning to say to himself,—'Well, I am almost ashamed of this movement; I thought it would turn out better. I thought it was a serious, deep, and penetrating movement at the heart of the Church, bent on substantial changes, and a real rise in the Church's true and practical system. It seemed to aim at permanent effects, and not at temporary displays; to be indifferent to show, provided the leaven was working; and to be content to be underground, rather than run the risk of sparkling and vanishing. It seemed to cast its bread upon the waters, and to expect to find it after many days. But now its character is altered: the contest is now about outside fragments and ecclesiastical strips. It is a rubrical controversy now. With huge solid deficiencies and difficulties pressing upon us on all sides; with relaxed Church discipline, and a vast poor population estranged and wanting—a Church feeling and influence actually creating among them—with a church losing its hold upon the mass, and wanting a new substratum and basis, a new set of relations with the mass of its members—with this work upon us, we are expending our whole strength on the question of preaching in black or in white, and having, or not having, a weekly offertory. With every thing loudly calling for an inward and solid reform, we are paper Churchmen and rubricians.'

"I can conceive a person passing this judgment, I say, upon the present Church movement. I do not say it would be a fair one; but it pictures our dangers and our tendencies. All movements have their phases and digressions, their humours and transition states. They are coloured by particular ideas, which get uppermost, and which seem to appropriate them. I only hope our own Church movement will pass out of this present intense rubrical phase, and the stage of minutiæ and technicalities, before it is quite pulverized by them. I claim, at any rate, the right of considering myself a Churchman, a Tractarian, and one of the Oxford school (if that is more explanatory), without being a purist in rubrics, or sympathizing with, in their present form, either the surplice or the offertory, or many other questions now agitated. M. A. Oxon.

Oxford, Saint Andrew's Day."

THE VISION OF ST. ANTHONY THE HERMIT.

"Once, when he was sitting at his customary toil, he fell into a trance, and groaned much at the sight he saw. After a while, he turned to those who were with him groaning, and prayed with much trembling, remaining a long time on his knees. When, at length, he rose, the old man began to weep. His friends, trembling and in great alarm themselves, begged to know what it was that shocked him, and urged him till he was forced to tell. 'O, my children,' he said at length, with a deep sigh, 'it were better to die before that vision is fulfilled.' On their pressing him, he continued with tears, 'Wrath is about to overtake the church, which is to be given over to men like irrational brutes. For I saw the table of the Lord's house hemmed in by mules who were striking about with their hoofs at every thing within, as is the way with mannerless beasts. You see, now, why I groaned so much; for I heard a voice, saying, "My altar shall be polluted."' Two years after this vision, the assault of the Arians took place, when the churches were plundered, and the sacred vessels given to heathens to carry off, and heathens from the workhouses compelled to attend the holy communion with them, and in their presence wanton insults offered to the Lord's table."—*British Magazine.*

GOOD THINGS FROM THE CALENDAR;

OR, FACTS AND THOUGHTS WORTHY TO BE KNOWN AND STUDIED DAILY.

February 9th. ST. APOLLONIA.

At Alexandria in the year 249, in a civil broil occasioned by vile calumnies poured out against Christianity, this holy virgin perished. Every charge which could be made against the doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church had long been sedulously advanced by the pagan priests, and the smallest misdeed of any Christian was magnified into the greatest villany, as if such were practised and recommended by all Christians. A tumult arose; Alexandria seemed like a city taken by storm. The Christians made no opposition, but betook themselves to flight, and beheld the loss of their goods with joy; for their hearts had no ties on earth. Their constancy was equal to their disinterestedness; for of all who fell into their hands, St. Dionysius knew of none that renounced Christ. Let us learn to bear misrepresentations and persecutions in the spirit of the saints. To bear infamy and all kind of sufferings with unshaken constancy and virtue is true courage and greatness of soul, and the test and triumph of virtue; and to sink under misfortunes is the most unworthy baseness of soul.

February 10th. ST. SCHOLASTICA.

She was sister to the great St. Benedict, and lived about the year 540. Lewis of Granada treating of the perfection of the love of God, remarks of St. Scholastica that she must have received strong pledges and most sensible tokens of his love, seeing she depended on receiving so readily what she asked of him. No child could address himself with so great confidence to his most tender parent. The love which God bears us, and his readiness to succour and comfort us, if we humbly confess and lay before him our wants, infinitely surpasses all that can be found in creatures. Nor can we be surprised that he so easily heard the prayer of this holy virgin, since at the command of Joshua he stopped the heavens, God obeying the voice of man! He hears the most secret desires of those that fear and love him, and does their will: if he sometimes seems deaf to their cries, it is to grant their main desire by doing what is most expedient for them, as St. Austin frequently observes.

February 11th. SAINTS SATURNINUS, DATIVUS, AND MANY OTHERS, MARTYRS OF AFRICA.

The emperor Dioclesian had commanded all Christians under pain of death to deliver up the holy scriptures to be burnt. Saturninus and others, to the number of forty-nine, had met together on a Sunday to assist at the celebration of the divine mysteries, and to receive comfort from the sacred writings, when the magistrates came with a troop of soldiers and seized all of them. They were soon after put to death.

The example of these martyrs condemns the sloth with which many Christians in this age celebrate the Lord's day. When the judge asked them, how they durst presume to hold their assembly against the imperial orders, they always repeated, even on the rack, "The obligation of the Sunday is indispensable. It is not lawful for us to omit the duty of that day. We celebrated it as well as we could. We never passed a Sunday without meeting at our assembly. We will keep the commandments of God at the expense of our lives." No dangers nor torments could deter them from this duty. A rare example of fervour in keeping that holy precept, from which too many, upon lame pretences, seek to excuse themselves.

February 12th. ST. BENEDICT OF ANIAN.

He flourished about the year 800 in the South of France, and notwithstanding his noble birth, and the many temptations which the world spread before him, he retired into the desert, in order to gain a greater mastery over his passions, and to give himself up to divine contemplation. God bestowed on him an extraordinary spirit of compunction, with an infused knowledge of spiritual things in an eminent degree. He died in great tranquillity at Inde.

The experienced masters of a spiritual life, and the holy legislators of monastic institutes, have in view the great principles of an interior life, which the gospel lays down: for in the exercises which they prescribe, powerful means are offered by which a soul may learn perfectly to die to herself, and be united in all her powers to God. This dying to, and profound annihilation of ourselves, is of such importance, that so long as a soul remains in this state, though all the devils in hell were leagued together, they can never hurt her. All their efforts will only make her sink more deeply in this feeling knowledge of herself, in which she finds her strength, her repose, and her joy, because by it she is prepared to receive the divine grace: and if self-love be destroyed, the devil can have no power over us; for he never makes any successful attacks upon us but by the secret intelligence which he holds with this domestic enemy. The crucifixion of the old man, and perfect disengagement of the heart, by the practice of universal self-denial, is absolutely necessary before a soul can ascend the mountain of the God of Jacob, on which his infinite majesty is seen separated from all creatures; as Blosius, and all other directors in the paths of an interior life, strongly inculcate.

February 13th. ST. CATHARINE OF RICCI.

This saint was born at Florence in 1522. God, in the merciful design to make her the spouse of his crucified Son, and to imprint in her soul dispositions conformable to his, was pleased to exercise her patience by rigorous trials. For two years she suffered inexpressible pains under a complication of violent distempers, which remedies themselves served only to increase. These sufferings she sanctified by the interior dispositions with which she bore them, and which she nourished principally by assiduous meditation on the passion of Christ, in which she found an incredible relish, and a solid comfort and joy. She received such favours from God that the most enlightened persons in Italy delighted to visit her; but the least distinction or commendation gave her inexpressible uneasiness and confusion. Most wonderful were the raptures of St. Catharine in meditating on the passion of Christ, which was her daily exercise, but to which she totally devoted herself every week from Thursday noon to three o'clock in the afternoon on Friday.

February 14th. ST. VALENTINE.

Valentine was a holy priest in Rome, who, with St. Marius and his family, assisted the martyrs in the persecution under Claudius II. He was apprehended, and sent by the emperor to the prefect of Rome; who, on finding all his promises to make him renounce his faith ineffectual, commanded him to be beaten with clubs, and afterward to be beheaded, which was executed on the 14th of February, about the year 270. To abolish the heathen's lewd superstitious custom of boys drawing the names of girls, in honour of their goddess Februata Juno, on the 15th of this month, several zealous pastors substituted the names of saints in billets given on this day.

February 15th. SAINTS FAUSTINUS AND JOVITA.

Faustinus and Jovita were brothers, nobly born, and zealous professors of the Christian religion, which they preached without fear in their city of Brescia, whilst the bishop of that place lay concealed during the persecution. Julian, a heathen lord, apprehended them; and the emperor himself passing through Brescia, when neither threats nor torments could shake their constancy, commanded them to be beheaded. They seem to have suffered about the year 121. The more we share in the suffering life of Christ, the greater share we inherit in his spirit, and in the fruit of his death. To souls mortified to their senses and disengaged from earthly things, God gives frequent foretastes of the sweetness of eternal life, and the most ardent desires of possessing him in his glory. This is the spirit of martyrdom, which entitles a Christian to a happy resurrection and to the bliss of the life to come.

St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi used frequently to say, that she never could have resolved to do even the most trifling action, such as to go from one room to another, if she had not thought that it was in conformity to the divine will, and that she would never omit doing any thing which she believed was pleasing to the Divine Majesty; and that if, having begun any action, the thought should have suggested itself to her, while she was about it, that it was contrary to the will of our Lord, in that same instant she would have immediately abandoned it, even though the not accomplishing it should have cost her her life.

Thaulerius makes mention of a certain learned and holy man, who being at the point of death was begged by his friends to leave them some good piece of advice; his answer was this, "The summary and the substance of all doctrine is, to take all things that happen, from the hand of God, and not to desire aught but to accomplish in all things his divine will."

ST. JOHN'S SEMINARY
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